

EAST GREENBUSH CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BUDGET REVIEW & ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2019

**1. Call to Order – 7:32 p.m.**

**2. Attendance**

BRAC: Ms. Garrigan-Piela, Ms. Noeth, Mr. Noeth, Mr. Pratt,  
Mr. Romanowski, Ms. Tooker

Board/Admin: Mr. Edson, Ms. Taylor

Guest: Mr. Bordick (CASDA)

**3. Review of Timeline & Attendance Zones Study**

Mr. Bordick introduced himself as a former Superintendent at the Lansingburgh Central School District for many years. Upon retirement, he served as an interim Superintendent for the Ichabod Crane, Schodack, Chatham, and Wynantskill Schools. Mr. Bordick currently works as a consultant with the Capital Area School Development Association (CASDA). The Association provides professional development to schools and conducts special studies, as requested.

Mr. Bordick explained the need for the study based on current and projected enrollments for the District. He said the committee will be studying housing developments, expected business growth, class sizes, enrollments, and other data during the next several months. Mr. Bordick said the first report draft is scheduled to be shared with the committee in November. He indicated the study would take into account the school district's historical commitment to the neighborhood school concept and class size goals.

Mr. Bordick requested input and comments on the study from BRAC members; key points are summarized below:

- Additional community participation in the meetings is desired; potentially Mr. Adam can do email blasts or other communication on the study to generate interest; specific statements or summaries of the study progress is desirable
- All committee meetings are open to the public; the study information was re-advertised on the website prior to the meeting
- One parent spoke about her son's move from Green Meadow to Citizen Genet; the experience was very positive, with a very similar curriculum and culture; often students are very resilient and adaptable, with parents having a more difficult time with changing schools

- Bus service to a new school will be available to any students impacted by a redistricting determination
- Study information should be disseminated quickly and frequently to the public; reaching out to the PTO groups may be beneficial for distribution of information
- Parents are commenting using social media, but much of it seems to be misinformation; multiple methods of communication should be used by the school district
- Apartments in the border zone areas can be used to even out school populations; this has happened on a historical basis, for example Greenbush Station
- School Messenger may be an effective way to communicate to parents, particularly on a building level
- An update on Kindergarten registration would be helpful
- Information on expected 2019-2020 class sizes would be helpful; this information is included with the budget packet for the March 13 Board of Education meeting
- Timing of the meetings starting at 7:30 p.m. can be challenging for parents of young children
- Another communication distribution method could be requesting bus drivers to hand out information to students on the bus; some individuals expressed safety concerns with this idea
- Bell Top has been reported as a specific community with a unique culture, which does explain the attachment for students and parents
- All K-5 schools in our District perform well academically, although each building has some unique cultural aspects
- There is uncertainty about how big the student population will grow in the near future; there are concerns about large class sizes
- Building capacity information will be useful; Mr. Edson reported that three classrooms utilized by Questar at Goff will be discontinued in the 2019-2020 school year and four classrooms utilized by Questar at Red Mill will be discontinued in the 2020-2021 school year
- Renovations of bathrooms in the current capital project will shrink available classroom space; this adds to some faculty uncertainty
- Maps would be helpful to see the neighborhoods; Google Maps on the screen could be an option
- The Bell Top site is very small; an expansion of the building might not be feasible; no aid for any expansion would be provided by the State if space was available in other elementary buildings
- Some schools use a K-2 or K-3 model for some buildings; this increases the number of transitions for students; the change in Citizen Genet from a grades 5-6 building to a grades K-5 building in the late 1990's was partially designed to lower the number of transitions for students

- A benefit of East Greenbush elementary schools is consistent curriculum
- Some parents believe it is best for a student and his/her siblings to start and finish a grade series in one building

Mr. Bordick supported the idea of upfront communication, which may serve to make the proposed changes more palatable to the public over time. He said that projecting enrollments and class sizes is not an exact science. The impact of the Amazon distribution warehouse and Regeneron expansion could be significant along with the additional numbers of employees in the region. He said the entire District could be impacted by the changes. Mr. Bordick also noted that other districts are starting to see an increase in live birth rates.

Mr. Edson distributed two packets, one with current Bell Top enrollment by neighborhood and the other with K-5 building enrollments, sections and class sizes from 2009 to 2018.

Mr. Edson spoke to larger neighborhoods in the border zone that could be impacted in the future along with current K-5 enrollments:

- Avenue ABC Cluster - 11 students
- Bloomingrove Drive Cluster - 14 students
- Dutch Acres North Cluster - 23 students
- Dutch Acres South Cluster - 27 students
- Haywood Lane Cluster - 18 students
- Oak Hill Apartments - 20 students
- Teliska Cluster - 17 students
- Thompson Court Cluster - 4 students
- Valley View Cluster - 10 students
- Van Allen Way Cluster - 4 students
- Washington Avenue Cluster - 4 students

Mr. Edson distributed a historical summary of K-12 enrollment by grade level from 2009 to 2018. Enrollment was as of the October date set by the State Education Department for Basic Educational Data System (BEDS) collection. Total enrollment was highest in 2009 at 4,482 students and has declined to 4,083 students in 2018. Unadjusted class sizes for grades Kindergarten through Five students have generally been in the 22 range, with some variation in individual buildings. Mr. Edson highlighted the increase in enrollment at Bell Top of approximately 40 students in the last few years.

**4. Other - Scheduling**

Mr. Edson advised that the March 25 meeting has been moved to April 8 due to a scheduling conflict for the representatives from the Town of East Greenbush.

**5. Adjournment - 8:50 p.m.**